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City Kills New Move on Open Exams

Attempts to split a proposed charter amendment which would open examinations for police and fire department chiefs into two ballot measures failed Tuesday evening and charges that one councilman is "trying to kill it (the amendment)."

Councilman Ross Sciarrotta moved to split the amendment so that the people might vote on open examinations for either police or fire department chiefs rather than on the entire package.

During discussion of the motion, which was seconded by

Nicholas Drale, J. A. Beasley told Sciarrotta, "You'll have to make up your mind."

In an exchange between Sciarrotta and Victor Benstead, Benstead charged Sciarrotta is "trying to kill it before it gets to the people." Benstead quickly added, "It won't work." Sciarrotta's only reply was, "You kind of irk me . . ."

Lt. Hyman Fischer of the

Torrance Police Department told councilmen splitting the issue would show "lack of confidence in the police or fire department, or in both."

Following the brief exchanges the motion was withdrawn. Councilmen have until Feb. 14 to act on their own, something that is possible since Sciarrotta hinted two weeks ago, "I may change my mind."

Savings, Loan Assets Climb

American Savings and Loan Assn. topped the half-billion mark in assets during 1963, according to a report issued by the association's vice presi-

dent, Lowell Peterson. Assets of the 13-branch business climbed from \$431,831,411 at year-end to \$519,903,750 on Dec. 31, 1963.

...Peebles

(Continued from Page 1)
 partment, and here it has been on one man."

The other reports mentioned by Benstead are two reports promised by Jack Goertzen, deputy attorney general whose first report resulted in the Tuesday night firing of Peebles.

Peebles is on the job this week, and will be until the order to dismiss him is formalized by a resolution. Under the city charter, he is entitled to a hearing within 30 days. City Attorney Stanley Remelmeier said.

...Override

(Continued from Page 1)
 to seek a hike in taxes soon, but they say the reserves—about \$2 million—will hold the district for a year while "an agonizing reappraisal of financing is made."

These people deplore increases in teacher's salaries; seemingly heavy administrative staffs; and rising costs of maintenance and operation. Some of the increases in costs are due to inflation; others to need for the district to remain in a competitive position.

Certainly, the "agonizing reappraisal" is needed. But whether it is sound business to deplete all the reserves is another question. Most businessmen will say it is not. The decision will be made by the taxpayer.

THESE SAME opponents appear as defenders of the local taxpayer. That the local taxpayer is overburdened is a fact. Rising costs in almost every field of government have forced taxes up to the point that they appear to be the only thing in the universe which defies the law of gravity. The natural reaction has been opposition to increases in taxes.

Yet, of all the taxes which a man pays, only school taxes must be approved by the voter. There is room here to ask the question: Is opposition to school taxes based on a generally fed-up attitude with spiraling taxes of all kinds? Some people must answer yes to that question.

Why do these people see no need for a tax increase now? Part of the question is answered by the presence of a large reserve. The rest of the answer is less obvious. There is concern that school funds have not been spent wisely. Statistics, supplied by the County Superintendent of Schools, largely discount that concern, for Torrance remains far down the list in nearly all costs of education.

THERE ARE some opponents who fear the five-year term of the proposed increase in taxes will allow the board to get out of touch with the people. Others feel the local taxpayer has paid his share. It's time the state assumed its fair share of the cost of education, say many. There is little that can be said about these kinds

of fears, for there is no guarantee on the future.

The school affairs committee of the Torrance Chamber of Commerce recommended against support of the override in a report made to the board of directors. The committee vote was split and the report was prefaced with what seems to be a fair summary of the position—the why and how—to the override.

"The split vote," said the committee report, "indicates rather a difference in approach to the problem of a tax override rather than opposition to the need for funds above those provided by a \$2.40 tax rate."

THERE IS a kernel of truth in much of what the opposition says. Opponents argue passage of the present override will only perpetuate a situation that cannot be justified. They argue, too, decreasing state support will not be given if local voters continue to approve overrides, and perhaps they have seized upon the only weapon which can be used to attack the larger problem.

Regardless of the decision next Tuesday, its reverberations will be felt throughout the city. It is not easy, say members of the Board of Education, to ask for more funds. The collorary to that is an opposite: it is not easy for property owners to approve a hike in their taxes.

Is there a final solution? The answer can only be "maybe." There is a perspective to the problem, however, and we will take a look at that perspective in the final installment of this series.

...College

(Continued from Page 1)
 giving appraisals of the proposed Torrance site.

Trustees of the state colleges said the 200 acres would be adequate for the development of a campus for 16,000 full-time students. No additional land will be needed, according to spokesmen for the college.

The site is located within the city of Rolling Hills Estates and is zoned for scientific research and development. Rolling Hills Estates has opposed location of the college on the Peninsula, claiming loss of revenue from the land will seriously impair the financial solvency of the Palos Verdes school district.

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